



HERRITY REPORT



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May 2008 “A Month in Review”

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Working Towards A Solution For the I-66 Corridor

The I-66 corridor may be the most congested corridor in Northern Virginia. Because of the congestion many of the County's secondary roads, including Braddock Road, Route 29, and Little River Turnpike, are used as alternatives and therefore are also extremely congested. In 1999 the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (VDRPT) performed a Major Investment Study (MIS) for the I-66 corridor. The MIS concluded that a multimodal investment strategy is required to accommodate projected travel demand in the study area by the year 2020. In 2001, VDOT and VDRPT used the MIS as a starting point for a multimodal Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the I-66 corridor from west of the I-66/I-495

interchange (at Cedar Lane) to Route 15. The EIS was stopped in 2002 and there has been no significant work done towards a solution for the congestion on I-66 since.

The funds for the EIS have remained available and VDOT and VDRPT have now restarted the multimodal EIS for I-66 outside the Beltway. The revised schedule for the EIS has not been completed but should be available toward the end of the year. Because completion of this study is a critical step in the process towards a solution to I-66 congestion, I made a proposal, which was unanimously approved by the Board, to send a letter to the Secretary of Transportation and the Chairman of the NVTa expressing this Board's full support for the timely completion of the study and that we are ready and willing to assist VDOT and VDRPT with the study should they need our assistance. I further asked that our Department of Transportation assign someone to monitor and provide regular updates on the progress of this project and to work to insure the project scope includes the tie in to I-495 and not just to Cedar Lane. Without completion of this study even if money became available there would not be a solution on the table to fund. It also is required before any private sector proposals could be offered – much like the HOT lanes proposal on I-495. I will continue to actively pursue a solution to the congestion on I-66 and surrounding roads.

Addressing our Current Economic Challenges Should Be a Priority

It is a long understood economic premise that for every dollar raised by our commercial tax base the cost of services is a fraction of the revenue it produces. The converse is true for our residential tax base, for every dollar in residential tax base the services required to serve it exceed the dollar. For over five years I have been inquiring as to the revenue and cost of services equation for the high density residential tax base in our County. At our second board meeting in January I introduced a motion to have the County Executive work with the Fairfax County Economic Development Authority to undertake an analysis of the current revenue/cost of services ratio for the residential, commercial and high density residential tax base. The Board voted to send this to the Economic Advisory Committee for further deliberation. Supervisor John Foust is the chair of this committee and I am the vice chair.

The Economic Advisory Committee was created in the early 1990s to assist the Board of Supervisors in dealing with the problems that arise in difficult economic times. Even though we are undoubtedly in difficult economic times no meeting of this very important committee has been scheduled. I have made multiple requests for a meeting to be scheduled. Following multiple phone calls to the Chair of the Committee, I sent a written request for a meeting on March 24 with a copy to the Chairman of the Board of Supervisors. Despite continued requests for a meeting of the Economic Advisory Committee none have been scheduled. I believe it is absolutely imperative that in these uncertain economic times we as a Board are doing everything we can to minimize the pain. Economic Development, which if done correctly could ease the heavy burden currently placed upon our homeowners, does not appear to be a priority for some on the Board.

Since I have been unable to get the Board to hold an Economic Advisory Committee meeting I will be looking at alternative ways to engage our citizens on creative ways to address our current economic situation and study the impact on our commercial tax base. It is a shame that as our citizens are forced to closely examine their economic situations they can't count on the Board of Supervisors to do the same.

Access to Fairfax County Parkway and I-95 Needed For Fullerton Industrial Park

At the June 2 Board of Supervisors meeting I made a proposal, jointly supported by Supervisors Hyland and McKay, which was unanimously approved by the Board, to find funding and much-needed access to the Fairfax County Parkway and I-95 for vehicles exiting the Fullerton Industrial Park *at the completion* of the Parkway and its interchanges. Many of the businesses in Fullerton Industrial Park located there primarily for access to I-95. Currently this traffic *has* access to the Parkway and I-95 northbound via Fullerton Road. Plans call for Fullerton Road to become an overpass with no access to the Parkway and also call for a new ramp at Boudinot Drive. The problem is the ramp and Boudinot is in Phase Four of the project, costs approximately \$17M, and is unfunded. This will leave the numerous businesses in the Fullerton Industrial Park, including a UPS facility with 250 trucks, isolated from the Parkway and I-95 North. The only option for these trucks is to travel through main Springfield on an already congested Backlick Road or to go long out of their way to Rolling Road to reach the Parkway and/or I-95 North. Through truck traffic is currently prohibited on Fullerton Road at Rolling Road.

Supervisor Hyland and I proposed that the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) include a single ramp to allow access from Fullerton Road to the Parkway and I-95 North. FHWA has included this ramp in the RFP. Very preliminary estimates for this single ramp are approximately \$6M and it is unclear if funds are available. This is not a perfect solution, but the current situation is completely unacceptable. Thus, we have directed our Department of Transportation to work with VDOT, FHWA, and the Department of Defense to find funding and/or a solution for this much-needed access.

Progress on West Springfield High School Renovations

As I mentioned in my March 2008 edition of the Herrity Report, West Springfield High School is in need of some major repairs both internally and externally. I am pleased to announce that at a recent town hall meeting with more than 400 parents, students and teachers in attendance, a plan was introduced by FCPS to address some of the problems at the school in the short term.

- The girls and boys bathrooms closest to the main gym have been renovated.
- Most of the major plumbing problems have been addressed.
- Plans are underway to replace the outdated piping throughout the school.
- The entire exterior surface will be painted (except the windows – see below). Some of this painting has been completed – including the rusty fences behind the school.

- A study is being conducted on replacing all of the single pane windows in the school this summer.
- Some carpeting throughout the school will be replaced.
- The West Springfield High School sign in front of the school has been repaired. A new sign will be installed over the summer.
- Some of the water fountains will be replaced.
- The lights on the main athletic field which currently sit atop wooden poles are currently under study and design to be replaced.
- The temporary trailers that have never been repaired or replaced will finally be replaced with newer trailers making for a much better teaching environment for students.
- The track which has large cracks on an uneven surface will finally be patched this summer making it more conducive for track meets and then will be completely replaced in 2009. Currently all track meets have been held on other area school tracks due to the unacceptable condition of the West Springfield track.

I am very pleased with these improvements, but much more work needs to be done including the complete renovation of West Springfield High School. The recent repairs are appreciated, but only a complete renovation will ensure that our kids will continue to have a school that they can be proud of now and for many generations to come. Although the physical condition of the school has deteriorated, we should note that the students continue to perform at an extremely high level which is an incredible testament to the teachers and staff.

On June 10, I will be attending a meeting to begin organizing a group that will continue to find solutions to the many problems that exist at West Springfield High School. Working with this group, we will continue to be persistent until these problems/issues are resolved and West Springfield is placed on the CIP for a full renovation. School Board member, Liz Bradsher, Principal Wardinski, Delegate Dave Albo, and incoming and outgoing PTA Presidents Nancy Baldino and Leslie Carlin have been an incredible force behind the improvements that have been made, and together we will strive to make a difference for the community and our children. I encourage all parents in the West Springfield pyramid to get involved with this effort – please contact Christian Deschauer in my office if you need more information.

Protecting Our Cemeteries

I recently met with Delegate Dave Marsden, Captain Bruce Ferguson of the West Springfield Station Police Department and Fairfax County History Commissioners Lynne Garvey Hodge and Mary Lipsey at the site of the Marshall Family Cemetery. This cemetery, located in Burke, was recently vandalized. The cemetery is also overgrown and a portion of the chain link fence, originally installed to deter vandalism, has been destroyed.

Fairfax County has many similar isolated and long-forgotten cemeteries that often become the target for vandals. In walking the site and surrounding area we discussed

possible solutions for protecting and preserving these cemeteries. The restoration of these damaged monuments depends on financial resources and technical expertise which are often out of reach for private property owners.

We will continue our discussion on solutions for the Marshall Cemetery as well as other county cemeteries in June. I believe that these historic markers are links to our past, a tribute to those who have come before us. These monuments often reflect the traditions and values of the many people who made our County their home.

Springfield District Neighborhoods Take Opportunity to Enhance Their Communities

Fairfax County recently announced a funding opportunity for selected projects through the Neighborhood Enhancement Partnership Program. The program aims to increase resident participation in civic engagement and neighborhood beautification efforts. A total of \$100,000 is available in Fiscal Year 2009. Through a competitive process, awards up to \$5000 will be made on a one-time basis for selected projects. A pre-application workshop was held on June 3 to answer questions. Many representatives from Springfield District homeowner and civic associations attended the meeting and will be submitting proposals for projects to enhance their community. For example, a Fairfax Station homeowners association is proposing to restore a much-used trail and pedestrian bridge in a nearby stream valley park. I am pleased that many organizations are taking advantage of this opportunity to address local neighborhood needs. If your organization would like further information on how to get involved and submit proposals, please contact Sara Brinkmoeller at 703-324-5551 or sara.brinkmoeller@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Upcoming Events and Information Items

- **West Springfield High School Meeting on June 10**

The West Springfield PTSA will be holding a meeting on June 10 at 7:30 PM in the West Springfield High School cafeteria to discuss the current condition of WSHS and what steps need to be taken by the West Springfield community to raise awareness, organize and begin working towards solutions. If you would like more information on the meeting please contact Christian Deschauer of my staff at 703-451-8173.

- **Rolling Road Widening Project Public Hearing Set for June 12**

The Virginia Department of Transportation will be holding a Public Hearing regarding the proposal to widen Rolling Road between Old Keene Mill Road and the Fairfax County Parkway, June 12, from 5 to 8 p.m. at West Springfield High School. I have held several meetings with the affected communities to limit the impact of the widening on the neighborhoods with some success. This will be your official opportunity to comment on the project. Staff from VDOT and the Fairfax County Department of Transportation will be present to solicit input from

and answer any questions residents may have regarding this project--the plans are not finalized. Any residents interested in viewing the proposed plans in advance of the meeting are welcome to stop by my office during normal office hours. Those who cannot attend the hearing are encouraged to submit a comment form to VDOT via its Web page for this project available at:
http://www.virginiadot.org/projects/northernvirginia/rolling_road.asp

- **VDOT to Hold Public Hearing on the Six-Year Program for Secondary Roads**

At its upcoming meeting on June 30, the Board of Supervisors will be inviting the public to provide comment on VDOT's Six-Year Program for secondary roads in Fairfax County. You may recall the Board previously approved the projects in this program last year; however, with the recent Supreme Court ruling that the NVTAA did not have the authority to levy taxes and fees, the funding for these previously-approved projects has significantly diminished. VDOT has subsequently updated its Six-Year Program to reflect this ruling and the Board is asking for the public's input on these projects. The hearing is scheduled for 3:30 p.m. in the Board Auditorium of the Fairfax County Government Center at 12000 Government Center Parkway in Fairfax. For more information, please contact Peyton Onks at 703-451-8873 or peyton.onks@fairfaxcounty.gov.

- **Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for the new VRE Burke Centre Garage**

The new parking garage at the Burke Centre VRE station on Roberts Parkway recently opened and provides commuters with 1,292 parking spaces as well as two new walking paths for adjacent communities to access the station area. An additional 300 outside spaces and the kiss-and-ride area are still under construction. I plan to attend the official ribbon-cutting ceremony which is scheduled for Saturday, June 28, from 1-2 p.m. For more information on this project, visit the Fairfax County Web site at:
<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/news/2008/123.htm>

- **Burke Centre Library Opens June 28**

The new Burke Centre Library located at 5935 Fred Oaks Road opens on June 28 after a ribbon-cutting ceremony scheduled for 11 a.m. Features of this library include the county's first drive-through window where patrons will be able to drop off books or call ahead and pick up books; an eight-person conference room and a silent study room with WiFi; another study room for four, 24 public access computers, and a meeting room for 90 people. The library is located right off the Fairfax County Parkway and close to those residents who live in the central and southeastern portion of the Springfield District. Please consider joining me and others on June 28 to celebrate the opening!

- **Ribbon Cutting Ceremony Scheduled for Braddock Park Field**

I will be cutting the ribbon in a ceremony on Saturday, June 21 to celebrate the newly installed synthetic turf field at Braddock Park. The synthetic field significantly increases the field's playing capacity, reduces maintenance needs and improves drainage on the field. Players will benefit from the state-of the-art field surface, which is playable year-round and doesn't require closure for seeding, inclement weather or application of pesticides. I played many games on the field at Braddock Park and I'm excited to see that this upgrade will serve future generations. The park is located at 13451 Braddock Road in Clifton in the Springfield District. The public is invited to the ceremony.

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